



# **The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Khartoum**

## **Briefing Note 1**

Three City Land Nexus Research Team

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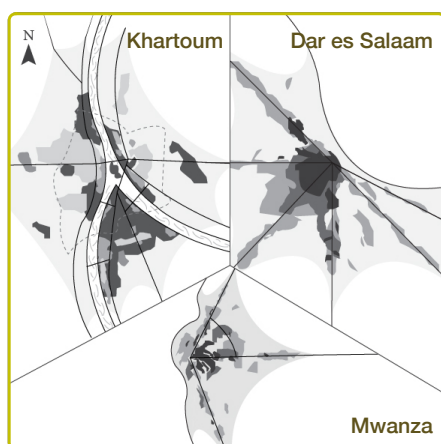
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**Contacts** Gordon McGranahan  
(gordon.mcgranahan@gmail.com),  
Alphonse Kyessi (akyessi@gmail.com),  
Salah M. Osman (smosman99@gmail.com),  
and Griet Steel (g.steel@uu.nl)

A full list of authors and contributors can be found in Annexe A.

# The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Khartoum

## Three City Land Nexus Research Team



**Summary** Cities are largely self-organising systems and can play a pivotal role in a country's economy. Unfortunately, neither conventional markets nor urban plans are very well suited to guiding what goes where in a city efficiently or equitably. As a result, cities are often exceedingly unequal, with certain groups finding it difficult to secure reasonably well-located and liveable homes. This Briefing Note is intended for readers interested in new ways of thinking about how to engage with cities to provide more and better affordable housing. It starts by introducing the land nexus processes and vulnerable groups in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Khartoum. It then contrasts the affordable housing trajectories in the two Tanzanian cities with that of Khartoum, and ends with an illustrative example of an action in each city that could make their land and housing trajectories more inclusive.

## 1 Land nexus processes and vulnerable groups

Both Dar es Salaam and Khartoum are the primate cities of their countries, while Mwanza is a second-tier city in Tanzania and subject to the same national laws and land planning systems as Dar es Salaam.<sup>1</sup> All three cities have been growing rapidly, with increasing numbers of households trying to secure their place in their city's

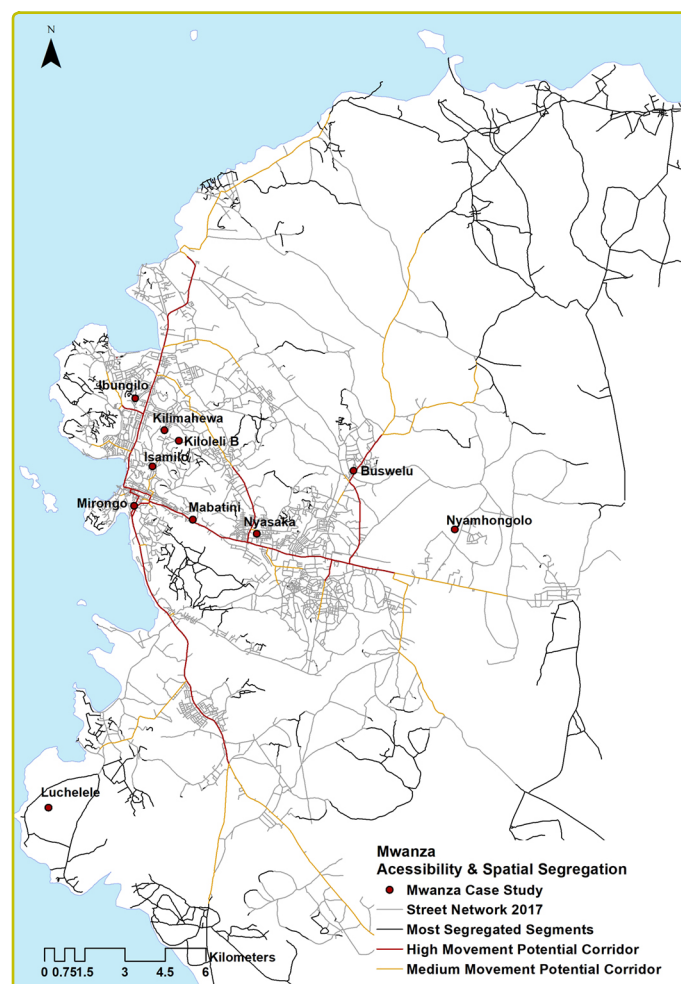
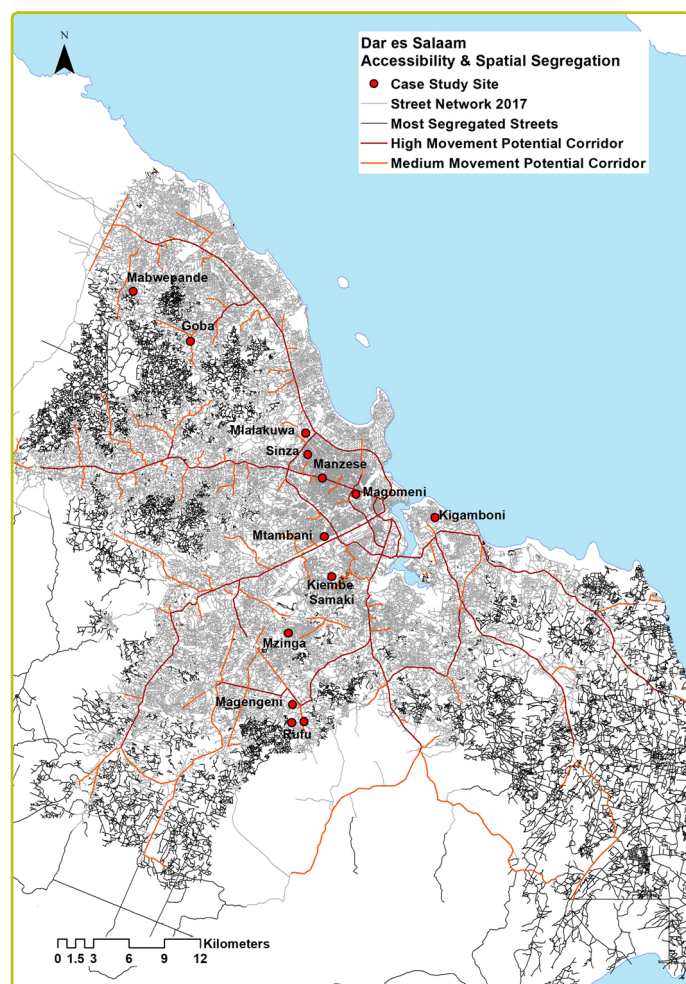
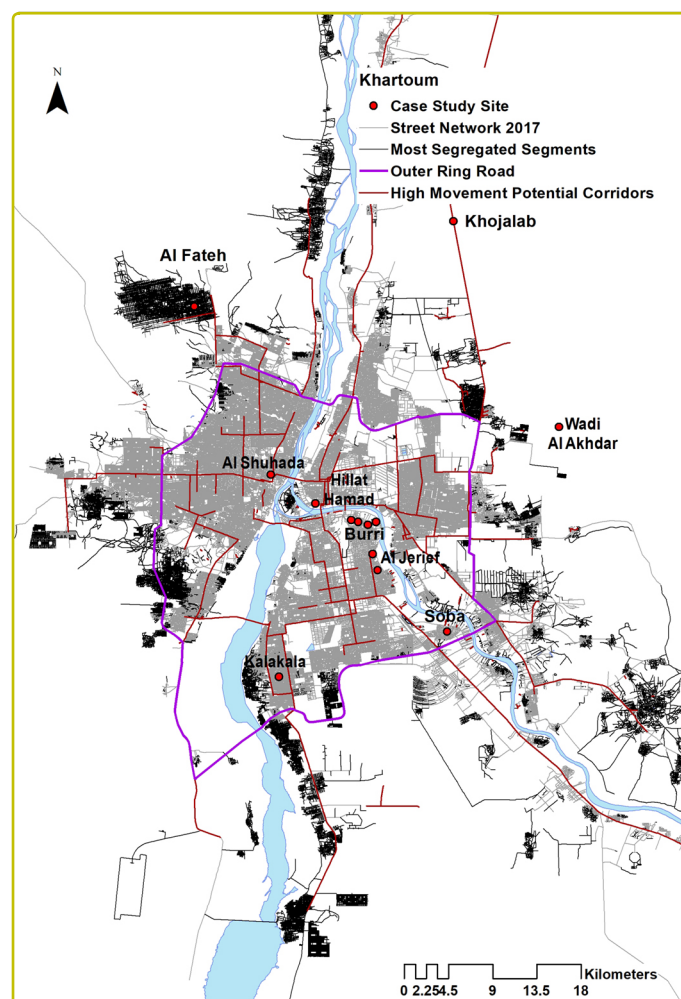
land nexus – the densely gathered configuration of people, buildings, infrastructures, and enterprises that largely draw people to cities, the benefits of which are very unevenly distributed across a city's landscape. This uneven distribution of people, services, and spaces across the urban land nexus can be visualised in the space syntax maps in [Figure 1](#). These maps show a similar centre-to-periphery organisation of spatial accessibility and segregation that impacts distribution of people and services across the cities. For a full description of space syntax methods, refer to [Annexe B](#). The research informing this Briefing Note focused on challenges faced by people of low socioeconomic status, and especially those who were

<sup>1</sup> Both Dar es Salaam and Mwanza are regions as well as cities; but in Dar es Salaam the boundaries are contiguous, whereas in Mwanza most of the area of the region is beyond the boundaries of the two municipalities that make up the city. In this Briefing Note, the names Dar es Salaam and Mwanza refer to the cities, unless otherwise noted.

also a member of one or more of the following groups: migrants to the city, informal settlement residents, tenants, and women. These groups raise different land nexus issues across the cities.

**Migrants.** As in politics, incumbency has advantages when it comes to securing a place in a city's urban land nexus, and migrants, especially those of low socioeconomic status, are at an inherent disadvantage. All three cities have historically had high levels of migration, but a large share of the migration to Khartoum has been forced migration, linked to conflicts and environmental crises in other parts of the country, and in some cases nearby countries. This, and the related poverty of many of the migrants, has had a profound influence on the city's land nexus, and the government's attempts to control it. It has reinforced a more confrontational approach to informality. Many foreign migrants – who are not allowed to own land – have had to live in crowded rental accommodations, creating another vulnerable group. Establishing good terms with the various migrant groups is important to achieving inclusive urbanisation in all three cities, but is

**Figure 1** Space syntax maps of Dar es Salaam, Khartoum, and Mwanza showing high movement potential corridors and spatially segregated streets. Space syntax models were developed by the Institute of Development Studies.





particularly salient in Khartoum, despite the overall level of net migration being lower.

**Residents of informal settlements.** Living in informal settlements that do not conform with formal regulations avoids restrictions of the formal land nexus but brings its own challenges, often including insecurity. In Khartoum, the population share that lives in informal settlements is lower than in the other two cities, but its illegality creates serious vulnerabilities. Under Tanzanian law, informal urban land claims are not illegal, and ward and *mtaa* (sub-ward) officials work to rationalise such land claims. In both Tanzanian cities, the majority of the population live in informal settlements, including a significant share of middle-class residents, giving informal land more political legitimacy. But many residents still face serious difficulties. In all three cities, the governance of informal settlements remains critical to achieving greater inclusion.

**Tenants.** Tenants of low socioeconomic status are particularly vulnerable to land nexus pressures: they are prone to being priced out of their homes if neighbourhood conditions improve, and to being refused compensation in cases of government-led displacement. Partly as a result of this, tenants often have less vested interest in their neighbourhoods. The shares of the population in rental accommodation in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam are both about 40 per cent (2012 census), and a significant share of these are very poor. Rental accommodation is less prevalent in Khartoum but represents a particular vulnerability for less well-off foreign migrants and refugees, as noted above. In all the cities, policies for the rental sector are relatively undeveloped, and improvements to the governance of rental housing could do much to support more inclusive urbanisation.

**Women and gender relations.** While the homes of migrants, informal settlement residents, and tenants tend to cluster spatially within the land nexus, those of women tend to mirror where men settle. The burdens of the land nexus are gendered, however. Women taking on the caring roles in and around the home are particularly burdened when basic household services (e.g. adequate water supplies) are lacking, or facilities (e.g. hospitals) are distant from the home. Even mortality statistics indicate that land nexus issues are gendered. Of the 200,000 deaths in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza in 2012, about 10 per cent of women's deaths were maternal; for men, about 6 per cent of deaths were due to traffic accidents (as compared to 2 per cent for women). Both are likely to be influenced by where one lives, but in very different ways. Women's voices need to be heard, not only in their homes but more widely.

## 2 Contrasting trajectories of affordable housing: looking back to act forward

### 2.1 Dar es Salaam and Mwanza

Most affordable housing in these cities is in informal settlements, and is provided by entrepreneurial self-builders who finance, commission, organise, and oversee the building of their own houses. Development led by self-builders often starts in relatively inaccessible locations on the cities' periphery, where they can buy cheap plots. They often build their homes incrementally, moving in early on, often from more central locations where they may have been renting. They work to address their lack of services, either through self-provisioning or at a later stage by lobbying for formal provisioning. Local officials play an important role in land transactions. Informal transactions are not registered centrally and do not provide owners with titles; however, they do provide owners with evidence of their right to the land. Owners expect this to go uncontested.

Over time, as settlements consolidate, many owner-occupiers build and rent out additional houses or rooms, on their original plots or nearby. With decades of infilling and crowding, the density of consolidated informal settlements is higher than in planned settlements, though even in consolidated settlements there is comparably little vertical development. For some settlements that were once on the outskirts but now considered central, tenants have become a majority, absentee landlordism has increased, and owners are potentially interested in selling out to developers.

There are numerous problems with these informal settlement patterns. However, they provide a large share of affordable housing, and are creating a landowning lower-middle class. The informal system has arisen in large part because the formal sector has failed to deliver, and it exhibits properties that a successful formal housing system will need to emulate if it is to be affordable to the majority of the cities' residents, including the more disadvantaged groups.

### 2.2 Khartoum

A big turning point in the development of Khartoum's land nexus came in the early 1990s, with a regularisation and resettlement programme that approximately halved the share of residents in the city's more visible informal settlements. For many years, Khartoum had been receiving waves of internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing drought and conflict. Camps had been set up and were partially resettled. When further conflicts were rocking Sudan in the 1990s, camps held only a small share of the well over a million IDPs; informal settlements were encroaching rapidly on all sides of the city, and were perceived by an

increasingly authoritarian and militarised government to be out of control. Sites and services schemes were set up to resettle people, providing them with partially serviced plots and requiring them to build their own homes. Those in informal settlements considered as squatters were moved to settlements on the far periphery, like Al-Fateh. The intention was to continue to use sites and services schemes to provide further affordable housing and reduce the pressure for informal settlement.

Khartoum's sites and services schemes have been beset with management problems, amplified by coordination difficulties, and low overall investment capacities on the part of both private and public actors. Households are hesitant to build their homes and move in unless they feel certain that other households will too, and services will be available. Service providers are hesitant to invest unless they can be sure that households will demand the services. Such coordination problems are also endemic to the informal settlement described above for Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, where the *ad hoc* and incremental settlement building that results is typically taken to reflect the lack of planning. In Khartoum's sites, neither homes nor services were developed at the anticipated rate because of their mutual interdependence and mutually reinforcing delays. As in the Tanzanian cases, often successes had to build on *ad hoc* incremental efforts that slowly raised the expectation that the area would indeed develop. Now, sites and services schemes of various sorts are believed to account for a majority share of the city's housing. However, a large fraction of the allocated plots remain either undeveloped or unserved, or often both.

Another problem for inhabitants of affordable sites and services schemes on the periphery of the city is their comparatively inaccessible location. In effect, people who struggled to get by more centrally were being asked to cope in inaccessible locations with almost no employment opportunities. The plots on the periphery could be expected to become more valuable in the future as the urban land nexus expands; however, this is more attractive to investors than to people with very limited incomes struggling to secure a livelihood in the present. For this and other reasons, the peripheral sites and services schemes created market pressures for speculation.

### 3 Acting to achieve more inclusive urbanisation

As indicated above, there are many things that can be done to help make land nexus processes more inclusive. The following three examples illustrate the sort of actions that can help secure adequate affordable housing. Partly because these cities are complex systems, an adaptive approach is needed, and each example builds on existing

subsystems: the informal settlement process and its regularisation in Dar es Salaam; simplified sewers and their scaling up in Mwanza; and plot-based affordable housing schemes and their revitalisation in Khartoum.

#### 3.1 Building capacity among ward and *mtaa* officials for the equitable settlement and regularisation of informal land in Dar es Salaam (and Mwanza)

Informal settlements in Dar es Salaam have problems; but they also provide most of the housing in the city, at a surprisingly low cost and in a manner more responsive to the needs of residents than most formal housing. The local officials at the ward and *mtaa* levels have played a key role in making the process of informal settlement operate as smoothly as it has. Ongoing processes of centrally led regularisation have been slow, patchy, overly oriented towards the formalisation of private property rights (to the neglect of securing public land for critical local needs), and unaffordable for many. Some recent and more successful regularisation efforts have involved ward and *mtaa* leaders and officials working closely with their communities. Such local actors would benefit from capacity building: in logistics of regularisation; on lessons from recent successes; and on ensuring fair and meaningful participation by all residents. To achieve inclusivity and sustainability, the capacity building would need to be designed to include the voices of vulnerable groups in the regularisation process.

#### 3.2 Developing co-production models for extending simplified sewers in Mwanza

The lack of sanitation in the more central informal settlements on Mwanza's rocky hills is a threat to the health and wellbeing of their residents – as well as their downstream neighbours. It also threatens the possibilities for them to achieve legitimacy in their city. Simplified sewers could, if scaled up to reach a large share of existing residents in these informal settlements, provide the basis for the official acceptance of more liveable settlements. Pilot projects have been undertaken by the utility, working alone, though in other parts of the world residents have played a large role in constructing (with supervision) and managing the lines. A co-production model, with community involvement, some technical support, and more in-kind contributions and management by residents, could bring costs down and help to ensure that tenants are not displaced as conditions improve.

#### 3.3 Reinvigorated and coordinated plot-based partnerships for affordable housing in Khartoum

Khartoum's sites and services schemes have provided a large share of the city's housing but have had serious weaknesses. To reinvigorate plot-based partnerships, the biggest challenge is to assure all parties, including

plot-holders and service providers, that other parties can be trusted to fulfil their roles. Developers, taking responsibility for servicing and building up many plots simultaneously, have been able to provide some such assurance, but at a cost many cannot afford. For more affordable models, incremental self-building and phased service provision has cost and financing advantages but need to be well orchestrated if all parties are to act in a mutually supportive and coordinated manner, and rent seeking and corruption are to be avoided. All models will need to be based on realistic assessments of the

economic capacities and willingness of plot-holders and other stakeholders to fulfil their roles. Better accessibility to livelihood opportunities could also enable better coordination: if it helps poor plot-holders to secure livelihoods, it likewise helps them to build their homes and pay for services. Involving plot-holders in the planning process, along with other stakeholders, could also help to coordinate the various actors. Collective finance, housing cooperatives, and other resident organisations could help to coordinate plot-holders. Rental options could improve economic viability for some.

**EARF** EAST AFRICA RESEARCH FUND The East Africa Research Fund (EARF) is a regional funding mechanism designed to procure and manage a portfolio of research projects under the East Africa Research Hub (EARH) of the Department for International Development (DFID), located in Nairobi, Kenya. EARF's reach covers Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

**Authors** The research for this Briefing Note was undertaken by the Three City Land Nexus Research Team. A full list of authors and contributors can be found in Annexe A.

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IDS, EARF, DFID or any of the institutions involved.

#### Other outputs from the project

**Synthesis Report** *Examining the Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Khartoum*

**Research Report** *Investigating the Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Khartoum*


**Briefing Note 2** *The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza*

**Briefing Note 3** *The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Khartoum*

**Annexes** *The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanisation in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, and Khartoum*

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